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Bridgeport, CT – Boston & Hyannis, MA – 617-783-8001 – [www.braziliancenter.org](http://www.braziliancenter.org)

March 8, 2018

**TESTIMONY FROM THE BRAZILIAN WORKER CENTER, BRIDGEPORT**

Good Afternoon, Co-Chairs and Members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee. My name is Lara Da Costa, and I am here today to speak on behalf of the Brazilian Worker Center of Bridgeport in favor of the following bills:

S.B. No. 15 AN ACT CONCERNING FAIR AND EQUAL PAY FOR EQUAL WORK

H.B. No. 5386 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING VARIOUS PAY EQUITY AND FAIRNESS MATTERS

H.B. No. 5388 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING A FAIR MINIMUM WAGE

Regarding a fourth Bill, H.B. No. 5043 AN ACT PROMOTING A FAIR, CIVIL AND HARASSMENT-FREE WORKPLACE, we believe this bill is important for all workers to have, given that everyone deserves a "fair, civil and harassment-free workplace."

However, this bill calls only for protection for workplaces where there are three or more employees – once again creating legislation that leaves domestic workers unprotected. Working alone, in fact, and typically being women, they are MORE vulnerable to harassment than other workers. We support this bill, but we urge you to consider reducing the number of protected workers present from three to one, so all workers can enjoy the protection they deserve.

Thank you very much for your time.

## **Connecticut Statewide Home Healthcare Justice Campaign**

### ***Organizing to Win the Connecticut Domestic Workers Bill of Rights***

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March 7, 2018

*Via email*

Dear Members of the Committee on Labor and Public Employees,

We are writing as members of the Connecticut Statewide Home Healthcare Justice Campaign to urge you to support Raised Bill 5386, but to amend it to include these provisions:

- 1. Reduce the requirement for standing before the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities (CHRO) from 3 people to 1 person;**
- 2. Avoid weakening, and then strengthen, Connecticut's overtime laws as they apply to home healthcare workers;**
- 3. Clarify language to indicate that all domestic workers will receive the minimum wage.**

While we recognize the importance of ensuring fairness in employment by providing access to information about compensation, as well as guarding against discrimination based on sex, we are also concerned about legal structures that lead to a pattern of unfair compensation for women of color and Latinos, who make up the vast majority of home healthcare workers. This includes, for example, the fact that home healthcare workers are not paid overtime.

Conditions such as these lead to thousands of working women being consigned to being among the working poor in our state. In addition to the moral wrong this represents, it also is leading to a dangerous disconnect between the need to recruit thousands of additional home healthcare workers to allow millions of baby boomers to age at home, because the work conditions for home healthcare workers leads to a 50% annual turnover among them.

Poverty for mothers means poverty for children. Children of mothers who are unable to earn a fair wage, and therefore have to work extraordinary hours to bring in enough food to feed their families and pay their rent, lag behind in school, become latch-key kids, and have a much poorer prospect of escaping poverty.

Based on this, we ask that you amend this bill to include the provisions cited above. These would address discrepancies in pay based on gender which are related to job categories. A striking example, mentioned above, is in the home healthcare sector, where home healthcare aides, unlike the vast majority of hourly workers, are not paid overtime.

This is, in effect, based on gender, because 99% of home healthcare aides are women. We can also say that it is based on race and ethnicity because the vast majority of these workers in our state are African American or Latinas.

We look forward to asking for these amendments at the hearing on Raised Bill 5386.

Sincerely,

Natalicia Tracy  
Executive Director  
Brazilian Workers Center

Bonnie Odiorne  
President  
Naugatuck Valley Project

Pastor Paul Sinnott  
Associate to the Bishop  
New England Synod – Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Lynn Campbell  
Executive Director  
Office for Catholic Social Justice Ministry  
Archdiocese of Hartford

The Rev. Joshua Pawelek  
Unitarian Universalist Society:East

Mark Kosnoff  
United Action Connecticut